

Message Text

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45

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 ACDA-19 NIC-01 OPR-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 SY-10 RSR-01 EB-11

AGR-20 COME-00 TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-06 /192 W

----- 043889

R 251400 Z JUN 73

FM AMCONSUL DOUALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 508

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOUALA 186

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINS, PINT, EK

SUBJECT: EQUATORIAL GUINEA: CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: SELF- IMPOSED ISOLATION AND HIGHLY PERSONAL RULE BY PRESIDENT MACIAS CONTINUE TO INTENSIFY THE CHRONICALLY UNSTABLE POLITICAL SITUATION IN FALTERING EQUATORIAL GUINEA. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT IS BEGINNING TO STIR FROM HIS WALLED COMPOUND (FORTHCOMING VISIT TO LIBREVILLE AND POSSIBLY CAMEROON) REPORTEDLY TO SEEK ECONOMIC SUPPORT, NO IMMEDIATE SOLUTION TO THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF FEAR, BUREAUCRATIC PARALYSIS AND ECONOMIC DECLINE IS IN SIGHT.

2. PERSONAL SECURITY PARAMOUNT. DURING A BRIEF VISIT TO SANTA ISABEL, 19-21 JUNE, IT BECAME QUICKLY CLEAR THAT THE SINGLE OVERRIDING POLITICAL CONCERN OF PRESIDENT MACIAS IS THAT OF HIS OWN PERSONAL SECURITY. ALTHOUGH THE 10 PM CURFEW IMPOSED ON THE CITY AFTER THE ALBATROSS INVASION SCARE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE RIGIDLY ENFORCED, THE INCREASING PHYSICAL ISOLATION OF THE PRESIDENT IS EMPHASIZED BY THE

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10-12 FOOT WALLS BEING RAPIDLY COMPLETED AROUND THE THREE BY SIX CITY BLOCK " PRESIDENTIAL ZONE" BEING BUILT AROUND THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. DURING RECENT WEEKS THE PRESIDENT HAS ONLY STIRRED FROM HIS PALACE TWO OR THREE TIMES AT NIGHT AND EVEN THEN HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ARMORED TROOP CARRIER. THIS SAME ARMORED VEHICLE PRECEDED THE PRESIDENTIAL CORTEGE AND PATROLLED THE LANDING STRIP PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR BATA (HIS FIRST SUCH TRIP IN SEVERAL MONTHS) ON 21 JUNE.

3. ECONOMIC SITUATION IN DECLINE. THE ELABORATE SECURITY CONCERNS OF THE PRESIDENT ARE PROBABLY NOT ENTIRELY UNWARRANTED. FOOD SUPPLIES HAVE BECOME SPORADIC AND PRICES ARE SKYROCKETING WHILE UNEMPLOYMENT IS CERTAINLY VERY HIGH. ONLY TWO OR THREE COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES APPEAR TO HAVE ANY FRESH STOCKS, AND THE ARRIVAL ON 18 JUNE OF A SPANISH MERCHANT VESSEL AND SOME COMMODITIES BROUGHT A MOB OF SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE TO

A FOOD STORE ONLY A FEW YARDS FROM THE U. S. RESIDENCE. THE THREAT PRESENTED BY THE REPORTS OF THE ALBATROSS INVASION LED TO A NUMBER OF NEW LIQUIDATIONS OF REAL OR IMAGINED ENEMIES OF THE REGIME. EVERY SUCH WAVE OF OFFICIAL ASSASSINATIONS OF COURSE ADDS TO THE EVIDENT HOST OF PEOPLE WHO CAN BE COUNTED AS PERSONAL ENEMIES OF THE PRESIDENT.

4. BUREACRACY AT A STANDSTILL. GOVERNMENTAL PARALYSIS APPEARS VIRTUALLY COMPLETE. ACCORDING TO EYEWITNESSES, MACIAS' MINISTERS TREMBLE IN HIS PRESENCE. ALL GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS ARE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT. ALL DIPLOMATIC NOTES ARE EVEN INITIALED BY THE PRESIDENT. THE ONLY MINISTER EVIDENTLY TRUSTED BY THE PRESIDENT IS MINISTER OF INTERIOR MASIE.

5. NO PROGNOSTICATIONS POSSIBLE. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH VARIOUS INFORMED OUTSIDE OBSERVERS (PROTECT ALL) ONE IS GIVEN WIDELY VARYING ESTIMATES OF THE ANTICIPATED LONGEVITY OF SUCH A TENSION- FILLED SITUATION. THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR INDICATES THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED FOR THE LONG HAUL AND HE STATED THAT HE SEES NO SUCCESSOR. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR POINTS AT SEKOU TOURE AND ASKS HOW MANY TIMES PEOPLE HAVE PREDICTED HIS DOWNFALL DURING 15 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CAMEROONIAN AMBASSADOR FEELS THAT THE SITUATION MUST QUICKLY LEAD TO A BREAK ALTHOUGH HE OFFERS NO INDICATION OF HOW THIS MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED. THIS SAME ESTIMATE IS OFFERED BY A EUROPEAN REPUTED TO HAVE CLOSE FINANCIAL TIES TO THE PRESIDENT. THE NIGERIAN CHARGE INDICATES THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS WITHDRAWING GRADUALLY EVEN TACIT SUPPORT OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. EVERYONE AGREES THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL NOT VOLUNTARILY STEP DOWN.

POLICE POWER AND OFFICIAL TERROR CAN PROBABLY HOLD DOWN
OPPOSITION FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME.
CLARKE

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